DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 333 620 EC 300 371

AUTHOR Gollnick, Donna M.; Chinn, Philip C.
TITLE Multicultural Education for Exceptional Children. ERIC Digest #E498.
INSTITUTION Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Va.; ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-EC-91-3
PUB DATE May 91
CONTRACT RI88062007
NOTE 3p.; Based on "Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society," Third Edition, by Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn.
AVAILABLE FROM Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1589 ($1.00 each, minimum order $5.00 prepaid).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cognitive Style; Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Materials; *Minority Group Children; *Multicultural Education; *Social Bias; Student Characteristics; Teacher Role; Textbooks
IDENTIFIERS ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

This digest examines the demographic composition of the U.S. school-age population, and derives an estimate of 1.4 million children with disabilities who are minority group members. The digest notes the purposes of multicultural education for all students and stresses the teacher's role in recognizing forms of bias in textbooks and other instructional materials. Forms of bias include invisibility, stereotyping, selectivity and imbalance, unreality, fragmentation and isolation, and language usage. The digest also discusses the importance of making the curriculum multicultural, recognizing subtle and unintentional biases in teaching behavior, organizing learning environments conducive to individual students' cognitive styles, and creating a positive school climate. (Nine references) (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED333620

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children
THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
1920 Association Drive • Reston, VA 22091-1589
FAX (703) 264-9494

ERIC Digest

14

MAY 1991 EDO-EC-91-3

#E498

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn

Demographic Composition

After remaining level through most of the 1980's, the child population of the United States is on the rise. The number of persons under the age of 18 will increase from 64 million in 1990 to 67 million in the year 2000. The number of babies born in 1988—3.9 million—was the greatest since 1964.

Young people from the least well off demographic groups form a growing segment of the child population. Black and Hispanic youth, who together constitute about 27% of the current child population, will make up nearly 33% of the child population in the year 2010.

In 1987, over 170,000 people under the age of 20 legally immigrated to the United States. The primary regions of origin were Asia and South America, and the countries contributing the most immigrant children were Mexico, the Philippines, Korea, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica (*U.S. Children and Their Families*, 1989).

Black Americans are the largest minority group in the United States—28.9 million in 1985, about 12% of the total population. Black Americans are drawn from a diverse range of cultures and countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The U.S. Hispanic population (not including the population of Puerto Rico) surpassed the 20-million mark in 1989. This represents a 39% growth since 1980—five times that of the nation as a whole. From 1985 to 2000, the Hispanic population is expected to grow by 46%. The term *Hispanic* refers to persons of all races whose cultural heritage is tied to the use of the Spanish language and Latino culture.

In 1990, over 30% of students in public schools, some 12 million, were from minority groups (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990).

In the school year 1988–1989, approximately 4.5 million children with disabilities received special education (U.S. Department of Education, 1990). Applying the 30% minority estimate to this number yields a minimum of 1.4 million children with disabilities who are also minority group members. In order for these students to develop to their fullest potential, educators will need to be skilled as both special educators and facilitators of multicultural education.

Purposes of Multicultural Education

It is important for all students to develop a multicultural perspective in order to enhance

- A good self-concept and self-understanding.
- Sensitivity to and understanding of others, including cultural groups in the United States and other nations.
- The ability to perceive and understand multiple, sometimes conflicting, cultural and national interpretations of and perspectives on events, values, and behavior.
- The ability to make decisions and take effective action based on a multicultural analysis and synthesis.
- Open minds when addressing issues.
- Understanding of the process of stereotyping, a low degree of stereotypical thinking, and pride in self and respect for all peoples (Cortes, 1978).

Areas within the educational setting in which multicultural education is implemented are textbooks and instructional materials, curriculum and instruction, teacher behavior, and school climate (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990).

Textbooks and Instructional Materials

How teachers use textbooks and other instructional materials is extremely important in providing multicultural education. Teachers need to recognize subtle as well as blatant forms of bias such as invisibility, stereotyping, selectivity and imbalance, unreality, fragmentation and isolation, and language (Sadker & Sadker, 1978).

Invisibility means that certain microcultures, including disability groups, are underrepresented in materials. This omission implies that these groups have less value, importance, and significance in our society.

Stereotyping assigns traditional and rigid roles or attributes to a group. Stereotyping occurs across cultural and exceptionality groups.

Selectivity and imbalance occur when issues and situations are interpreted from only one perspective, usually the perspective of the majority group. With such an emphasis, minority persons and individuals with disabilities often do not learn about the contributions of members of their cultural groups to the development of our society. Such biases prevent all students from realizing the complexity of historical and contemporary situations and developments.

Unreality is most likely to present itself in the portrayal of history and contemporary life experiences. Controversial topics are glossed over, and discussions of discrimination and prejudice are avoided. This unrealistic coverage denies children the information needed to recognize, understand, and perhaps conquer the problems that plague our society. Contemporary problems faced by individuals with disabilities and those from diverse racial and ethnic groups are often disguised or simply not included.

Fragmentation and isolation occur when publishers discuss issues, contributions, and information about various groups in a separate section or chapter apart from the regular text. This add-on approach suggests that the experiences and contributions of these groups are merely an interesting diversion, not an integral part of historical and contemporary developments.

EC 300 371

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Language bias occurs when materials blatantly omit such things as gender, disability, or ethnic group references.

Making Curriculum Multicultural

Components of multicultural education that are included in many educational programs are ethnic, minority, and women's studies; bilingual programs; cultural awareness; human relations; and values clarification. Concepts include racism, sexism, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, powerlessness, power inequality, equality, and stereotyping.

If teaching a culturally diverse student population, educators need to determine the microcultures that exist in the community. Schools that are on or near Indian reservations will include students from the American Indian tribes in the area as well as some non-Indians. Urban schools typically include multiethnic populations and students from middle and lower socioeconomic levels; inner-city schools are likely to have a high proportion of poor students. Teachers in Appalachian-area schools will need to be concerned about poor and middle-class families with fundamentalist backgrounds.

One strategy for multiculturalizing curriculum and instruction is teaching from a multicultural perspective. This approach will probably require some major changes in the educational program. In this approach educators will take affirmative steps to ensure that cultural diversity and exceptionality are reflected in the curriculum. It should facilitate the development of attitudes and values conducive to the preservation and promotion of ethnic and cultural diversity as a positive quality of society (Gay, 1977). It will enhance students' self-concepts as they develop pride in their own and other cultural heritages (Gay, 1977). Without too much effort, teachers can locate supplementary materials, information, and visual aids about people of other major cultures and people with disabilities. This information should be included as part of the curriculum in every subject area, regardless of how culturally diverse the community is.

Attitudes and Teaching Styles

A teacher's behavior in the classroom is a key factor in helping all students reach their potential, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, language, or exceptionality. Unknowingly, educators often transmit biased messages to students. Most educators do not consciously or intentionally stereotype students or discriminate against them; they usually try to treat all students fairly and equitably. However, we have learned our attitudes and behaviors in a society that has been ageist, racist, sexist, and ethnocentric. Some biases have been internalized to such a degree that we do not realize that we are biased. When teachers are able to recognize the subtle and unintentional biases in their behavior, positive changes can be made in the classroom (Sadker & Sadker, 1978).

Another area that teachers might investigate and change to better meet the needs of a culturally diverse student population is that of teaching and learning styles. Both teaching and learning styles can be categorized as either field independent or field sensitive. Field-independent teachers encourage independent student achievement and competition among students. Field-sensitive teachers are more interpersonally oriented and prefer situations that allow them to use personal, conversational techniques. Similarly, field- sensitive students perform better in social situations such as group work; field-independent students work well on independent projects. Often the teacher's style differs from the learning style of the student, causing a classroom situation that may not be conducive to helping students reach their potential. Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) showed that teachers could learn to organize learning environments conducive to individual students' cognitive styles so that all students could benefit equally from teaching.

Positive School Climate

A school that affirms multiculturalism will integrate the community in its total program. Not only will the educators know and understand the community, but the parents and community will know and participate in the school activities. As long as members of the community feel unwelcome in the school, they are not likely to initiate involvement. The first step in multiculturalizing the school is development of positive and supportive relations between the school and the community. Teachers can assist by asking community members to participate in class activities by talking about their jobs, hobbies, or experiences in a certain area. They can initiate contacts with families of students. They can participate in some community events. A sincere interest in the community, rather than indifference or patronage, will help to bridge the gap that often exists between the school and community.

REFERENCES AND OTHER RESOURCES

Cortes, C. E. (1978). Future will demand culturally literate citizens. *Thrust for Educational Leadership, 7*(3), 20–22.

Gollnick, D. M., & Chinn, P. C. (1990). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* (3rd ed.). St. Louis: Mosby.

Gay, G. (1977). Curriculum for multicultural education. In F. H. Klassen & D. M. Gollnick (Eds.), *Pluralism and the American teacher: Issues and case studies* (pp. 31–62). Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Quality Education for Minorities Project. (1989). *Education that works: An action plan for the education of minorities*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 316 626).

Ramirez, M., & Castaneda, A. (1974). *Cultural democracy, bicognitive development and education*. New York: Academic Press.

Sadker, M., & Sadker, D. (1978). The teacher educator's role. *Implementing Title IX and attaining sex equality: A workshop package for postsecondary educators*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 222 466).

U.S. Children and their families: current conditions and recent trends. (1989). A report of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. House of Representatives. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 158).

U.S. Department of Education. (1990). *Twelfth annual report to congress on the implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 321 513).

Yates, J. R. (1988). Demography as it affects special education. In A. Ortiz & B. Ramirez (Eds.), *Schools and the culturally diverse exceptional student: Promising practices and future directions* (pp. 1–5). Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

This digest is based on *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*, Third Edition, by Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn. (Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company, 1990), 272–309.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated.

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI88062007. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.